

TASKS unlimitedition

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

SPRING 2021



THANK YOU FOR YOUR 42 YEARS OF SERVICE

We are sending our deepest congratulations to Gil Bessard on his retirement after 42 years of dedicated service to Tasks Unlimited. Gil joined Tasks Unlimited in 1978 and held many positions since then, including lodge and jobs coordinator, program director, area supervisor, and most recently Director of Operations. Gil has been part of Tasks almost since its inception 50 years ago and a leader of the organization for many of those years.

Thank you, Gil, and best of luck in your retirement!

living. working. achieving.



FINDING A NEW PLACE TO CALL HOME

For Christian, living in an apartment on her own was becoming difficult. Thanks to a little help from her coworkers, she found a new place to call home.

Christian joined Tasks Unlimited in 2019, first working with a Case Manager and then joining our Jobs Training Program (JTP). Having always struggled to keep jobs, she was interested in the extra support that Tasks' supported employment provides. In the JTP, Christian received paid-on-the-job training in janitorial skills as well as professional development and peer support, while also building skills to manage her mental health. Upon graduation in 2019, she joined the janitorial staff at her first worksite.

With help from her new coworkers, Christian learned everything she needed to know to be successful in her cleaning route. She was also making new friends. When she shared that she needed housing that was more affordable for her, coworkers encouraged her to check out the Tasks lodges. The Lodge Program offers affordable housing in shared, interdependent homes in the community, where residents have autonomy and support each other in recovery—just what Christian wanted. Her coworkers described how their lodge is friendly, laid back, and a place where you can be independent, but there is also always someone there to help when challenges come up. After talking with her Case Manager, touring the lodge, and meeting the other lodge residents—Christian decided to move in and has now lived in the Independence Lodge for four months.

"I didn't want to go into a lodge where I didn't know people. And this made it easier—to know [that] the people that I work with-to know that they're pretty decent people to work with so might as well be decent to live with."

Now two lodge-mates are also her coworkers. They share transportation, which makes getting to work by 6 a.m. every weekday a breeze compared to relying on metro mobility, and enjoy a nap most days after returning home from their early morning shift. Christian looks forward to visiting the gym in her free time and, with the help of her lodge-mates, continuing her medication management. Most of all, Christian is grateful for her job and the community she has developed for opening the door to her new

MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

To say this has been a tough year is one of the biggest understatements ever.

The pandemic has brought disruptions, hardships, illness and loss, and Tasks Unlimited has not been immune. True to form, we have endured, adjusted as needed, taken care of one another, and have moved forward. The definition of resiliency is an ability to recover from or adjust easily to adversity or change and Tasks clients and staff have proven they are the epitome of resilient. We adjusted, we recovered, and we supported each other through some very difficult times.

As vaccines begin to roll out and we allow ourselves to be hopeful that we are on the downward side of the curve, it's a time for remaining vigilant, but also a time for taking stock of how this difficult time has been an opportunity to grow and see how resilient we are.

We've seen resiliency in the way that lodges and work teams have come together and supported one another at a time when normal routines were disrupted and the potential for stress and isolation was great. We've seen it in the way our staff pivoted in reaching out to clients virtually while taking measures to keep themselves and our clients safe. We've seen it in the many ways that our donors have stepped in and helped us get needed supplies and support.

While this past year has been brutal in many ways, we are also thankful for our staff, our clients and our donors who have all come together to help us get through this year and we welcome 2021 with hope and the knowledge that together we can overcome great adversity because we are resilient; we are Tasks Unlimited.

Karen Johnston **Executive Director**

NEW PARTNERSHIP TO SERVE HOMELESS YOUTH



Tasks Unlimited is excited to announce a new partnership to connect homeless youth who have serious mental illness with employment and mental health services. Our new partner, Youthlink, provides basic needs and resources for homeless

young people ages 16-24. Based in downtown Minneapolis, Youthlink is also the host site for the Youth Opportunity Center, a unique collaborative that brings together a variety of organizations and agencies that offer resources young people experiencing homelessness may need – all in one location. Tasks will become a YOC provider starting this month, adding a unique focus on youth who have a serious and persistent mental illness.

Tasks staff will provide an array of employment services to help young people access career readiness skills, gain employment, and advance employment. Youth will also be able to receive diagnostic assessment and psychiatric services through Tasks. As Kassia Janezich, Tasks Director of Vocational Services, says:

"There are large gaps in services for youth with disabilities, especially those experiencing or at risk of homelessness. We are excited to collaborate with other YOC providers and Youthlink staff to address these gaps and support young people in finding and keeping jobs."

While some employment services are eligible for reimbursement through the state, there are major barriers for homeless youth. The state approval process can take two or more months. Many youth are also wary of formal systems of services. It's important for staff to build trust to engage youth in the process. Donations help address these barriers, preventing young people from falling through the cracks and connecting them with supports to change the trajectory of their lives.

MEET OUR CLIENTS IN THEIR OWN VOICE

LISTEN TO A MEMOIR PODCAST

We invite you to listen to a series of flash memoir pieces read out loud by their authors, all Tasks clients. The "Flash" Memoir writing residency, with COMPAS Teaching Artist Glenda Reed, was available in 6 one-hour sessions through Zoom for all clients last fall. Flash memoirs are true-life personal short stories that give us a look into the writer's life. Get to know our clients and listen to one of their short stories in a podcast. Visit the link or QR code below to take a listen.

RETIREMENT COAT

I like the coat I got at the work site.

Because is not too hot or too cold.

It must be an expensive one because it is a Columbia brand. The building personnel on the second floor gave it to me as a retirement gift.

DANCING, WHAT I DO WELL! by Jermaine

Shaking my hips to the music while my brain processes the lyrics, I can feel the beats throughout. Dancing has a way of bringing to both mind and body, my freedom and liberation. Bouncing my butt or spinning my hands or twirling and swiveling my ankles and feet, lets me experience the joy of being. While listening to artists like Beyoncé, Lady Gaga, or Joachim Cooder, my body tingles all over from the vibrations of the music. I jump. I clap. I snap. I sing along.

And more importantly, I dance.

PLAYING HOCKEY by Mike

I would be playing hockey in the park right behind my dad and moms house right up until dark. My father would turn on the yard light or whistle, meaning that it was time to come home. "Flash" Memoir was provided in partnership with the arts organization COMPAS and funded through the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council. We are excited to continue offering virtual art classes in partnership with COMPAS, including upcoming residencies in animation and manga this spring.

Many thanks to COMPAS Teaching Artist and writer Glenda Reed for producing and mixing the podcast.

IN THE WOODS by Brenda

When I was seven years old my play time would be to play in the woods behind the vellow house, that had four bed rooms and two baths. The woods had a trail road because people paid my dad to dump trash back there. My dad would burn the tires, the trash and the old mattresses. My woods had pretty flowers and trees with bright green leaves, orange and red leaves and pretty yellow ones. Walking quietly you could see blue jays, robins, and foxes and deer and squirrels. The woods was my home away from home. My friends and I would build club houses out of the junk, that people through away. The woods was my forest, it was my imaginary and mystery place.



USE YOUR SMART PHONE DEVICE TO SCAN THE QR CODE OR FOLLOW THE LINK BELOW TO LISTEN TO THE PODCAST:

bit.ly/2ZDagDL



This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.



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HERE'S HOW TO SHOP CRITICALLY NEEDED ITEMS

Many thanks to everyone that donated items from our Amazon wish list during our Holiday Donation Drive! Your gifts helped visitors to our Northeast Outreach and Opportunity Center (the NOOC) and other clients in need stay warm this winter. We are still accepting items from our wish list to meet urgent basic needs.

To view the wish list, login to or create an Amazon account. To purchase items from the wish list, click "Add to Cart" and pay like you normally do on Amazon. Items purchased from our wish list are automatically delivered to us!

Due to COVID-19, we have stopped accepting drop offs without an appointment. To schedule an appointment to drop off new, unused items – contact us by email at development@ tasksunlimited.org or by phone, at 612-871-3320.

OUR MOST URGENTLY NEEDED ITEMS:

- TOILETRIES shampoo, deodorant, soap, lotion, menstrual pads, tampons, no strong fragrances, full-size and travel-sized items
- WARM ADULT CLOTHING new socks, hats and gloves, long-sleeved shirts, sweaters and sweatpants, long-johns, for men and women, neutral colors, medium to 3XL sizes
- SMALL BALANCE GIFT CARDS \$5-\$10 gift cards to restaurants and gas stations for people experiencing homelessness and/or living in their vehicle(s)

The NOOC is located in northeast Minneapolis and serves adults experiencing homelessness and mental health challenges.

FOR EASY ACCESS, USE YOUR SMARTPHONE DEVICE TO SCAN THE QR CODES BELOW OR TYPE THE LINK TEXT INTO YOUR BROWSER:



AMAZON WISH LIST

Use the link below for a full list of items on our Amazon wish list or to purchase items pictured below:

amzn.to/2PPExeF

AMAZONSMILE

Use the link below when shopping on Amazon and Amazon donates a portion of your purchase directly to us:

smile.amazon.com/ch/23-7087205







Explore more Charity Lists



Tasks Unlimited's Wish List - Our Greatest Needs

for Tasks Unlimited Inc ♥



